

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

301 State House  
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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 7212**

**BILL NUMBER: SB 566**

**DATE PREPARED:** Jan 19, 2001

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Accreditation of First Steps Providers.

**FISCAL ANALYST:** Kathy Norris

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**FUNDS AFFECTED: X GENERAL  
DEDICATED  
FEDERAL**

**IMPACT:** State

**Summary of Legislation:** Beginning July 1, 2003, this bill requires an individual who provides early intervention services to infants and toddlers under the First Steps Program to be accredited by an independent national accreditation organization. The bill allows the Division of Family and Children to establish exemptions necessary to comply with federal law. The bill also establishes the Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Accreditation Advisory Board and specifies membership and meeting requirements. It allows an individual to provide early intervention services for a maximum of six months without being accredited. The bill also makes technical corrections.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2001.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** This bill requires providers of early intervention services to infants and toddlers under the First Steps Program to be accredited by an independent national accreditation body. The cost involved in developing accreditation standards for a diverse group of providers is not known at this time. The cost to the First Steps providers or to the Division for the accreditation process is also unknown.

The bill establishes the Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Accreditation Advisory Board to advise the Division on the development and adoption of rules for the implementation of the accreditation requirement. Fifteen to nineteen members of the Board are to be appointed by the Secretary of the Family and Social Services Administration. One non-voting representative of the General Assembly is to be appointed by the Chairman of the Legislative Council. Members of the Board appointed by the Secretary are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses incurred. Members of the General Assembly are entitled to receive the same per diem, mileage, and travel allowance paid to members of interim study committees. The Board is to meet at least four times during the year the Board is authorized by this bill. The Board is estimated to cost \$9,000 for FY 2002.

*Background:* In FY 1999, the First Steps Program provided early intervention services for 9,943 children

birth to age three years. Over 3,900 individual providers are available to serve the needs of eligible children. Services are provided in the child's natural environment, which may include the child's home, a child care center, a park, or where ever the child typically spends time. This is not a facility-based heterogenous group of providers. Currently, there does not appear to be a national accrediting body that has developed accreditation standards for the diverse providers of early intervention services. CARF, The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission, one of the national accrediting bodies mentioned in the bill, has indicated some willingness to work with the Division to develop appropriate accreditation standards and to accredit providers accordingly once the standards are in place. The Family and Social Services Administration has indicated the cost associated with this process (*which is currently unknown*) would be absorbed within the agency's available level of resources.

**Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:**

**Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** The Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Family and Children.

**Local Agencies Affected:** Local First Steps providers.

**Information Sources:** CARF web page: <http://www.carf.org>, and Susan Preble, Legislative Liaison for FSSA, (317)-232-1149.